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MY NIGHT IN THE HOUSE.

A MAN with a wife and eleven children farming some of his own land, with a little house-property to look after, besides being guardian of the poor, parish vestryman, and perpetual chairman of the Anti-county-rate Movement, has quite enough on his hands to keep him at home. But my country—or rather my county—called me, and with the spirit of an old Roman, I resigned myself to my duty.

It happened in this wise. The supply of gas to our town had been for many years a disgraceful monopoly in the hands of the old company, as it was called. Last year some patriotic citizens, of whom, without vanity, I may say I was one, projected a new association for the purpose of providing Trixbridge with the means of illumination. Everything was done properly and in order. We issued prospectuses, held board meetings, allotted shares, and presented a bill to parliament for the 'Grand Trixbridge Gas, Coke, and Railway Company.' Of course, our bill was opposed tooth and nail by the old monopolising company. When the time came for parliament to decide upon the controversy, I was invited to bear testimony on our side of the question. As the new company intended to buy some of my land, and rent some of my houses for their works, I was naturally well qualified to speak of the excellence of their plans and the indescribable advantages which the bill would confer upon Trixbridge. There was another point. Mr Aspinall, the buff member for our borough, was suspected of favouring the old company. Now when he came down for his election, the honourable member—he was really an honourable—and myself were on the most friendly terms. So attached, indeed, had he shewn himself to me, and so domestically delighted with the society of Mrs Burtonshaw and our family altogether, that I had not only voted for him myself, but had contrived to secure him the votes of two sons, three nephews, one brother-in-law, and half-a-dozen electors with whom I happened to be connected in business. Our board, therefore, thought that if I were on the spot, and put the matter in a proper light to the honourable member, he might be induced to help us forward with our bill.

Thus it was that, after much solicitation, for the good of my country, I came up to London. There I stayed some weeks, passing much time in the committee-room of the House of Commons, but also not omitting to visit every place which was mentioned to me as worth seeing in or near the metropolis. My various adventures upon these tours of inspection are far too numerous to be here related. On the whole, I found the time pass very pleasantly, even though away from

my home and Mrs Burtonshaw. Everybody was exceedingly polite. My accommodations were excellent, and, what I had not expected, the eatables and drinkables supplied by the London hotel-keepers, really not amiss. About their cost, I am not able to speak, as the company paid the bill; but I never heard of any complaint on that score.

As for the other bill, the expectations of the board were completely realised. The Honourable Mr Aspinall, after a little conversation with me, shewed himself really enthusiastic on behalf of our project. 'The Grand Trixbridge Gas, Coke, and Railway Company was,' he said, 'a magnificent example of the benefits resulting from the great principle of association, and the whole scheme justified the character of England as the greatest commercial country in the world.' His admiration went further than mere words. He helped us famously with our bill in the committee, and made a fine speech about us in the House upon the 'second reading,' of which I was sorry to find, next day, that the stupid chatter going on in the House all the time prevented the reporters from hearing a single word.

In spite of this, however, we got our bill; and this glorious triumph was the occasion of my passing a 'night in the House' such as I shall never forget.

It was on the evening when the 'bill'—of course I mean the Grand Trixbridge Gas, Coke, and Railway Company's Bill—finally passed the House of Commons. Our excellent member had got me a seat in the Speaker's Gallery; he came and sat beside me there, and pointed out the celebrities of the House. I saw the premier, Lord John, Mr Dizzy, and other people, ministerial and oppositional, whose names I already knew. Besides these, I was lucky enough to see Lord Octavius Fitzhugh, our county representative, and his colleague, Mr Wire Cartridge, whose presence on this occasion was the more important, seeing that they so rarely attend the House. For half an hour and more I sat still, trying to hear what was said amidst the gabble going on upon all sides, and the noise made by members coming, going, and circulating like ants in a hillock, though not quite so silently, and possibly without doing so much work. Presently a member, whose face I knew—it was our other representative—stood up near the Speaker, flourishing a paper in his hand.

'That's our bill,' said Mr Aspinall—'to be "read a third time."'

I listened with all my ears, but could not even catch the title; all I heard were the words 'do pass.' But my companion, who knew the ways of the place, rose with a satisfied air and said:

'So that's all right, and now we can go to dinner.'

To celebrate our anticipated success, Messrs Pouncey and Co., our parliamentary agents, had invited the whole batch of us—members, directors, witnesses, solicitors; every one, in short, connected with the bill and the company—to a grand spread. Whether the cost figured in their account, I never heard, but believe not, at all events in that identical shape. But this was no concern of mine. The viands were excellent, and so was the wines. We did ample justice to both. The dinner came off in one of the handsome members' refreshment-rooms in the new palace of legislation. All the appointments, even to the plates and dishes, had 'House of Commons,' written in the black-letter which Mr Barry is so fond of, stamped upon them. The massive silver forks and spoons were thus marked, and bore, besides, the gridiron—or portcullis, as Mr Aspinall called it—the arms of the city of Westminster. This made them, he told us, national property; and any thief who carried off a single spoon would be guilty of high treason, and punished like Colonel Blood, who stole the king's crown some hundred years ago.

We had a jolly dinner, but broke up early, as everybody but myself seemed to have business to do. The House, we learned, had got into a debate, which promised to be long. As we left the dining-room, Mr Aspinall politely proposed to shew me some of the curiosities of the edifice, which I was most anxious to see. Barry's palace is nearly as big as a town; and one might go to the lobby, or the committee-room, or anywhere else that business called one for a year together, without guessing at a tenth part of the vast size and contents of the pile. So we went on, and up, and round, and down again, through a series of halls, ante-chambers, galleries, and winding staircases that seemed endless and countless. I saw a great deal of painting, and a great deal more carving, and heard a number of curious stories about both from my guide, who was exceedingly affable, and seemed to know everything. Yet I cannot say I remember much of what passed. The truth is, that between the cork-screw staircases and the blazing gas, and seeing so many things at once, my head grew quite dizzy, until I scarcely knew where I was. It was quite a relief to me when, as we were passing down another long corridor, a sharp rattle of bells broke upon us, apparently from all sides at once, and kept ringing away in volleys with extraordinary perseverance.

'By Jove,' said Mr Aspinall, 'there's the division-bell! I must rush off, or they will have locked the doors. Wait here for me a few minutes, and I'll come and fetch you when it is over. A thousand pardons.'

With this brief apology, he made a dash at a small door, leading, I suppose, by some short-cut, into the House, and disappeared. I sat down on a bench in a windowed recess, and felt glad of the opportunity to rest a little and clear the cobwebs from my brain. How long I sat there, I don't know; it seemed only a few minutes, but I fancy I fell asleep. When consciousness returned, it was still some time before I could recollect precisely where I was, or how I came there. The gallery seemed to stretch an almost infinite distance right and left. The lights were burning dim, and a pale gleam was thrown across at intervals from the sky outside, for the night was clear and moonlight. I felt shivering and a little frightened. Perhaps, I thought, I had no business there. My guide was gone, and if caught trespassing, what account could I give of myself? Yet I did not know which way to turn for an outlet.

Just then, I saw some dark figures in the distance coming down the gallery. They carried lanterns, and one of them had what looked like a huge black snake coiled up under his arm. As I learned afterwards, they were firemen carrying leathern hose, which were placed every night close at hand to the water-plugs distributed

over every part of the building. It was the precaution regularly adopted to prevent the recurrence of such a catastrophe as that which befell in 1834.

As the men passed, I shrunk up in my recess, and thought it lucky they went by without seeing me. After they were out of sight, I made a desperate effort to escape from my questionable position, and tried at the door through which, as I believed, my friend the member had previously passed. The door opened to my hand, but was the wrong one. I went through nevertheless, and found myself in a lofty and handsome room, quite filled with the moonlight that streamed through an expansive casement opposite the entrance. I walked to the window, and saw that it overlooked the Thames. The moon was high and bright. I could distinguish the bridge on the left, where the repairs were still going on, and the gray towers of Lambeth Palace on the other side of the river. All at once it flashed across me that I had been in the room before. It was a committee-room—the very one where we fought our bill so often, or else a facsimile. Now I knew where I was.

Before I had time to act on this knowledge, however, a step approached the door. I heard the handle tried, but no one entered. Then came the sharp click of a lock. Some vigilant watchman had found the door unfastened, and turned the key without looking in. I was too frightened to call out at the moment; but in a minute afterwards went and tried the door myself. It was too true—I was locked in. What made the case worse, it was Friday night. To-morrow was the legislative holiday. Not a soul was likely to come near the place until committee-time on Monday. Here, then, I thought, am I shut up, starving for forty hours, and, when released, may be arrested for a burglar.

The prospect was not reassuring. I went to the window again, but there was no escape that way. The casement was high up, and fastened besides. Far below, I saw the brown belt of mud left by the tide, which was at ebb, and a tier of barges lying aground in it. But no human being was visible, nor, if I shouted for help, could I have made myself heard at that distance. I did not like the look of things at all.

Coming back into the room, I sat down in the chairman's well-padded seat before the committee-table, and fell into a brown study. The thought then passed across me, that perhaps there were other doors to the place, some one of which might be unfastened. I got up and groped round the wall, particularly in the shady corner where the moonlight could not reach. Before long, I found what I sought. A door there was—a handle—it turned in my grasp—the means of exit were clear. The door, I concluded, led to one of those privileged entrances marked 'Private: for members only.' However, I was too glad to escape to stand on punctilios. I passed out into a sort of ante-chamber leading into a lobby, and thence into a short corridor almost dark, but I managed to find my way to the end which opened upon a well-staircase. Far down a single gaslight was burning, which threw its rays up the shaft. The place grim and lonesome enough; but I was fairly in for it, so down I went.

Down, and still downwards, the well-staircase led me. I reached and passed the gaslight; the place grew gloomier as I sunk further below its influence; yet I went on hoping to get at last into the central hall, or at any rate to find myself somewhere whence I could emerge from the trap. At last I reached a ponderous iron-bound door, which I pushed boldly open, and went through. Now, thinks I, we must have reached *terra firma*.

A few steps more shewed my mistake. I stood on the brink of another flight of stairs, leading down to some vast and black abyss. Some straggling rays of light, coming I knew not whence nor how, served partially

to reveal the extent and profundity of the cavern, into which I peered with a shudder. From its depths a chill, damp vapour floated heavily up. I scarcely ventured more than a glance into the yawning chasm before me, but drew back hastily to regain the upper air.

At this moment the door above me closed with a thundering clang! The sound reverberated in a long subterranean roll through the vault, and seemed to lose itself at last in infinite space. At that moment, however, escape was uppermost in my thoughts, and I felt my way to the door, and was horrified to discover that it had shut close, and remained fastened by its own massive weight. There was no handle or key in the inside: its smooth surface presented nothing for the grasp.

After a while, I left off trying to open it, and ceased shouting for help. By that time, I had got more accustomed to the gloom, and looking below, saw that there was light enough there to make a sort of darkness visible. Escape by the way I had entered was clearly impossible; so I descended the few steps still left, which landed me at the bottom. I found myself apparently in the very centre of a vast and interminable cavern. The staircase, down which I had come, was built within a massive dwarf pillar that rose from the floor to the ceiling. In front, a long row of similar pillars stretched in endless succession; to right and left other avenues, also flanked by columns of dark stone, extended as far as the eye could reach. Behind me, as I passed round the shaft through which I had descended, the series was still prolonged with no visible termination. Starting out, here and there, from the pillars, were tongues of gas flame, which flickered in the night-wind, and threw a ghastly sepulchral light over the vault. These lights seemed to burn without human interposition. They had evidently burnt through night and day, through session and recess, ever since the edifice was erected. Their presence seemed rather to increase than diminish the intense feeling of solitude, of supernatural gloom and vastness, which weighed upon me as I gazed around.

Then it flashed upon my mind that I must have got to the basement story of the palace of legislation, of which I had heard so many legends. The subterranean area, I knew, contained the vaults beneath St Stephen's Chapel, which were the scene of Guy Fawkes's conspiracy; but they now comprised much more. There were tales concerning the place in modern days—how that men had lost their way in its interminable recesses, and left nothing but skeletons, discovered months after their disappearance, and recognised only by the marks inside their boots. The very notion threw me into a cold perspiration, and I sunk back on the steps, down which I had just come, to recover breath and presence of mind.

Sitting there was not the way to escape, as I presently bethought myself. I started up, determined upon prosecuting an eager and methodical voyage of discovery. Surely there must be some means of exit from the huge dungeon which might be found by searching. I blessed the authorities who maintained the gaslights, dim though they were, in every part of the cavern: if it had been completely dark, I were lost indeed.

I walked down the stone avenues and round the huge columns; they seemed innumerable and interminable. The roof was arched between the pillars, and on every side were carvings of Gothic design, but roughly and imperfectly executed. It seemed like an embryo creation of the sculptures which had arrived at such redundant maturity above. The ceiling was low, and the huge columns with their vast diameters looked portentously massive from the want of height. I had heard often of the 'pillars of the constitution,' but never saw them before. But the lowering roof, stretching away on every side into such vast expanse,

oppressed me with its weight; it seemed constantly about to fall on my head. I stood still more than once, with an awful sensation, as if the constitution were on the point of tumbling in.

While these ideas passed through my bewildered brain, I was traversing through and round a monstrous succession of pillars. In several of them were doors, some of which proved to be fast; others opened upon winding flights of steps, like that I had descended into this world underground. Up, then, I went, with a dogged sort of persistence, turn after turn, groping in the dark and twisting round and round, to find myself invariably stopped at length by another door which I could not pass. I went up so many stairs, and they were all so like one another, that at last I grew quite puzzled. I remembered hearing that there were ninety-six staircases in the palace of Westminster; but it seemed to me at the time that I must have tried at least a hundred and fifty.

The next I attempted gave me a glimpse of hope, lost through my own folly. I got up without obstacle much higher than before, cheered by a light half-way. There was a door as usual, but luckily open. I passed on and up again, and reached a narrow corridor leading evidently to some inhabited district of the place. Before me, as I turned a corner, there suddenly flashed the apparition of a huge fire burning brightly in a wide grate. This formed the background of the picture. Nearer were shelves displaying a goodly array of crockery, and dressers glistening with plate. I was in the kitchen of the House. Before I had time to think, an approaching footstep struck on my ear. At that moment I felt so like a thief, that I fancied I should be taken for one. Recollections of the stories told us at dinner about Colonel Blood and the crown jewels came into my mind with a sort of thrill. In a panic, I turned and fled down the steps, like one escaping from a guilty conscience, and it was not until I had gone some distance among the turnings and windings of the pillars, that I recovered from my fright; then, indeed, I repented my absurd alarm, and sought to regain my way to the kitchen, but found I had lost the clue. I went round and round a hundred columns, and groped up many stairs, but could not discover the one I was looking for. Worn out at last with these perpetual clamberings, I threw myself upon a stone bench, and, as I fancy, slept.

I woke up shivering, hungry, desperate, and frightened. My nervous system was shaken by my sufferings in gloom and solitude. I longed, and yet dreaded, to hear a voice or meet with a fellow-being. In this state of trepidation I wandered on again; presently I came upon a singular scene, which did not tend to reassure me. The floor of the vault opened into a huge circular chasm, whence arose, in grim and fantastic outline, the shapes of wheels, and bars, and cylinders, glimmering in the dim light with most spectral aspect. Looking aloft, I saw the roof also pierced with a circular opening, in which was a vast apparatus of vanes, like a colossal smoke-jack, or wind-mill turned horizontally. On one side was another congeries of mechanism, which I recognised as a steam-engine. But everything was still, and dusty, and rusty. It looked as if unused for years, and passing rapidly into the ghostly state of existence. The concern was, as I afterwards learned, the old 'ventilator' of the House of Commons, long since abolished as a nuisance.

From this point I again roamed on, without guide or purpose, I cannot say how far or how long; my brain had got into a dreamy condition, and the only impression remaining was one of terror and loneliness. It seemed as if I had been buried in this cavern for twenty years. What next restored me to full consciousness was the breath of fresh air, bringing with it a dull murmur of winds and waters; I looked up, and saw a patch of sky bright with moonlight.

I had reached the river-end of the subterranean vault. Above me was a barred grating, opening upon the outer world; some loose heaps of broken stone and brick lay piled against the wall. I climbed up, and grasping the bars, placed my face close against them, inhaling with inexpressible delight the warm and balmy air from the river. The scene was the same which I had gazed upon some hours before from the committee-room; but I viewed it now from below. The moon by this time had fallen and the water risen; the Thames was now brimful between its banks; heavy barges were floating and 'wabbling' about at their moorings. The moonbeams brought out into strong relief the Lambeth Palace towers and riverside buildings on the other side, and drew a pathway of light across the dancing waters, almost up to my grating. For some minutes I clung desperately to the bars, and gazed out like one just emerging from the tomb.

Again I was disturbed and frightened by steps and voices. Two men approached with measured tread; I knew they were policemen, and my terror returned. I fell away from the grating, and in reaching the ground, knocked over a rumbling pile of stones from the heap. The policemen were startled as well as myself at the noise, and came up to the grating hoarsely shouting their customary challenge to trespassers. I slunk up close to the wall below the range of the bull's-eye lantern. As they passed the light along the grating, the shadows of its bars were thrown into colossal relief upon the pillar opposite, and trooped past like a file of black giants in solemn procession.

'There's nothing there, Simmons,' said one of the men at last: 'it must have been the ghost of Guy Fawkes. He haunts the old cellar still, they say.'

'More likely,' replied his companion, 'it was some rats out of the sewer. I'll speak to the clerk of the works to have the holes trapped again.'

'Why, there's plenty of rats up above in the House, let alone those in the sewer,' rejoined the first speaker.

The men laughed, and walked away; when they had passed out of hearing, I got up to renew my efforts at extrication. The brief glimpse I had obtained of the free world had inspired an irrepressible longing for air and liberty.

At length I was cheered by prospects of success. I came to a region of the cavern where several arches were built up with wooden partitions, forming what looked like store-rooms or offices. Here and there were windows, through which I could see big piles of paper. I found a door or two, but they were locked. Around were sundry packing-cases, a dismantled printing-press, and other signs of human frequentation. At anyrate, I was in the neighbourhood of my fellow-creatures.

After a little more wandering, I came to another doorway and flight of steps. I had been up a hundred before without avail; but this time the symptoms were more encouraging: the stairs were wood instead of stone, and lighted from above. I ascended, with a desperate resolve to escape; the time was past for fearing detection: let the worst happen, people are not sent to the Tower in these days.

It was all right. I reached the top without obstruction. Then came a long vaulted corridor, and at the end a double swing-door with glass panels, protected by a fretted grille of brass-work. Through this door, as I opened it, there came a gush of hot air, which, loaded with gas and breath as it was, seemed to me the most delightful breeze I had ever inhaled.

On passing through, I found myself in a vast and lofty hall, so brilliant with lights, that for the moment I was dazzled. I saw only a single figure, quaintly dressed, and with a sword by his side, who shouted in sonorous tones as I entered: 'Who goes home!'

The words thrilled through me. For hours I had

been doubting whether I should ever see my home again! By an irresistible impulse I rushed forward and caught him by the arm: 'I will,' I said; 'for God's sake, take me home!'

The man looked scared, as well he might. But at this moment there came forward a procession, headed by a solemn-looking personage in flowing robes and full-bottomed wig, marching on with all the attributes of grave authority and respect. I recognised the dignified functionary whom I had seen early in the evening occupying the chair of the House. Behind him came an irregular throng of members. It was Mr Speaker. The House was just up, and the invitation to which I had responded so unexpectedly, was only that unabolished formula, derived from times when a guard of representatives was sometimes necessary to convoy the Speaker safely to his home.

My appearance caused a momentary pause. It was no doubt sufficiently singular. Covered with dust and cobwebs, my dress soiled, my hat battered, my hair dishevelled, with the haggard hang-dog look derived from my long anxiety and subterranean wanderings, I must have looked anything but the respectable character I have always tried to maintain. Mr Speaker laughed distinctly; the man with the sword caught me by the collar, and looked for a policeman.

At this crisis, a well-known and welcome voice cried: 'Why, 'tis Burtonshaw, by all that's wonderful! Where, on earth, did you come from, my good fellow? and what have you been doing with yourself?'

It was Aspinall, my member for Trixbridge. He released me from a very awkward scrape; and a few words from me explained all necessary particulars.

'And so you have been roaming in darkness and cold for these six hours in the regions below,' he said at last; 'but come along, 'tis hardly two o'clock yet. A brush and cold water will put you to rights; and, egad, we'll make a night of it yet!'

I know that we did not get home till morning, and that the next few hours were spent far more pleasantly than the last half-dozen had been. But nothing occurred either then or since to efface the recollection of the sufferings and sensations I had experienced during My Night in the House.

GLIMPSES OF AFFAIRS IN AMERICA.

THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA AFFAIR.

It will be recollected that on the occasion of constituting the state of Missouri, in 1820, there was a compromise among parties to the effect that, in all the territory which had been ceded by France north of 36° 30', the state of Missouri excepted, slavery should be for ever prohibited; and the act which admitted the state to the Union bore a clause of this kind. Here was a law settling the question so far, one would think. Events proved that this was not so certain. Missouri having edged itself in as a slave state, there the affair rested; and when, in 1836, a slice of fresh free territory was added to this slave state, the compromise-clause does not appear to have been agitated. It was reserved for Mr Pierce's first congress to be troubled with the resurrection of a measure which the bulk of the members—and Pierce to boot—had probably begun to hope was past being brought to life. On the 15th of December 1853, a bill was submitted to the senate to organise the territory of Nebraska; and on this occasion the unhappy compromise rises from the dead. Let us look at our maps, and see where lies the region which was to provoke one of the severest contests that has ever occurred in or out of congress.

Nebraska was the name at first given to a large

tract of country, having on the east Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota, and stretching from 36° 30' or thereabouts, to 49° on the border of Canada. Its limits on the west were New Mexico, Utah, Oregon, and Washington. The more eastern portion of this vast territory, was fertilised by the rivers Platte, Kaw or Kansas, and other tributaries of the Missouri, and its only occupants were certain tribes of Indians. The rich lands on the borders of the rivers, and beyond them the rolling and flowery prairies, were, however, becoming too attractive to be much longer exempted from the ever-operating law of Anglo-American migration. The federal government had begun to cause regular explorations west of Missouri, about 1838, but on so imperfect a scale, that fresh and much more extensive investigations were ordered in 1842; the commander of the scientific explorers on this occasion being Lieutenant John Charles Fremont. The history of this journey of discovery to the shores of the Pacific is full of romantic incident, and as affording accurate accounts of that great western wilderness which will shortly afford a home for millions of civilised men, is deserving of more notice than it has generally obtained in Europe. Fremont, 'the pathfinder,' was eminently successful in his explorations through the obscure passes of the Rocky Mountains. On one of the topmost peaks of this lofty range, upwards of 13,000 feet above sea-level, he gallantly waved in triumph the national flag, where, as he says, 'never flag waved before.'

The discoveries of Fremont opened the way for settlements, but none, except in an irregular manner, could take place till the territory was organised and surveyed; and these final measures were pushed on by Missourians and others personally acquainted with the capabilities of the unappropriated lands. Among the parties who urged forward the bill for organising the territory, there could hardly fail to be a consciousness that, as Nebraska lay directly north of 36° 30', it was exempted from the contamination of slavery, in virtue of the compromise. But, then, was this compromise of abiding effect—was it a compromise at all? All admitted, what was undeniable, that there was a statute which guaranteed that all lands north of the line 36° 30', should be consecrated to freedom. This awkward difficulty was got rid of by declaring that the statute was unconstitutional, an interference with the rights of squatter sovereignty. As for there having been a compromise, where was it seen in any valid obligation? It was only a fond tradition, of no binding effect whatsoever. There may have been some mutual concessions among parties when the Missouri bill was passed, more than thirty years ago; but what had the present generation to do with the parliamentary stratagems of a past age? Besides, the compromise measures of 1850 affirm and rest upon the proposition, 'that all questions pertaining to slavery in the territories, and the new states to be formed therefrom, are to be left to the decision of the people residing therein, by their appropriate representatives, to be chosen by them for that purpose.*' According to this view of the subject, the Missouri compromise of 1820 was over-ridden by Clay's omnibus measure of 1850, which was said to obliterate the line 36° 30' from the map. Neither branch of congress unanimously adopted so sweeping a doctrine. The progress of the bill, which speedily assumed a form for organising two territories, Kansas and Nebraska, was opposed at every step.

Again, expostulation was useless. The bill passed both branches of the legislature in May 1854, the majority, as customary on similar questions, being swelled by northern Whigs. An act was accordingly framed for organising Kansas and Nebraska as separate

territories, with the whole apparatus of local government and legislation; and giving to the inhabitants the right to introduce or reject slavery, on the true squatter-sovereignty principle. The two territories being now fairly established, that kind of rush of settlers ensues which has been previously pictured. In their choice, Nebraska appears to have been passed over in favour of Kansas, which, lying to the south, on the parallel 36° 30', immediately adjoining Missouri, drew crowds towards it; and, as is well known, became the object of a keen and disorderly competition between the southern slaveholding party and the free-soilers of the north. There was little time to spare. In the old world, kingdoms and principalities have taken centuries to mature. The greater number, after a thousand years of social organisation, have not yet acquired so much as the capacity to keep order at a public meeting, let alone the power of self-government. Even the British monarchy, with all its appliances, seems to be unable to ripen its ordinary run of colonies under a period of some years—indeed, several of the more elderly of these communities are now, after long tutelage, only beginning to walk alone. The United States contrive to arrive at this maturity in a few weeks or months. Kansas was organised on the 30th of May 1854, and on the 29th November following, it was to elect a delegate to represent it in congress. In the short intermediate period, cities, towns, and voting-places were to be established; though, as the materials of architecture were principally deals and canvases, this feat was perhaps no great stretch of genius.

Previously to its organisation, Kansas had become a hopeful field of labour to several missionaries connected with one of the divisions of the Methodist body, which is known to have done good service in carrying a knowledge of religion into remote quarters of the Union. Among those who had set up their tabernacle in Kansas, was a somewhat renowned personage, the Rev. Tom Johnson, who is described as ultra coarse and presuming—a violent pro-slavery partisan, and a ready tool of those planters in Missouri who had an eye to the fertile plains of the territory. This worthy, whose head-quarters were at a place called the Shawnee Mission, a short way from the frontier, held slaves long before the organisation of Kansas—a circumstance which helped materially forward the plan of introducing and holding slaves on a large scale. Of the Rev. Tom's clerical accomplishments, we possess no record. All we know is, that, located in a hulking brick-building at Shawnee Mission, he was a leading man among those who charged themselves with enlightening the Shawnees, Delawares, Kaws, Sacs, Foxes, and other tribes of Indians; some of whom, as our authority states, already possessed in an 'eminent degree the marks of whisky civilisation.*' We do not learn that Tom kept a barrel to aid him in his labours; but that is of no consequence. There were barrels at hand, and they were doing their usual horrid work on the unhappy Indians—a doomed race. The bill opening the territory to white immigration, provided that the natives should not be illegally deprived of their reserves; but no arrangement, however humane, short of the annihilation of whisky, could sustain them in their possessions, and, unless removed, they were evidently destined to become beggars and plagues to society. A number, wisely ceding their lands on reasonable terms, were transferred to localities at a suitable distance, where they remain till a fresh wave of white immigration overtakes them.

As the aborigines, half demoralised, gloomily clear out, the whites pour in; land-offices are opened; 'claims' begin to dot the face of the country; and the

* Report of Senate's Committee on Territories, in Reference to Nebraska, January 1853.

* The Conquest of Kansas by Missouri and her Allies. By W. Phillips. Boston. 1856.

cluster of ugly buildings at Shawnee Mission, becomes a rallying-point for the settlers. We are to view Kansas in this transition state in July 1854, when the contest between pro-slavery and anti-slavery emigrants comes distinctly into notice. According to the account of the pro-slavery Missourians, they were stung by newspaper reports that great bands of New Englanders would soon be on their way to introduce free institutions into Kansas. About this time, several joint-stock concerns were formed in the free states for this avowed purpose. One of them, called the New-England Emigrant Aid Company, with a capital stock of 5,000,000 dollars, was legalised by an act of incorporation from the legislature of Massachusetts. The plan proposed by the company was this: Agents were to buy lands in Kansas, and sell them in lots to immigrants, until the territory was organised as a free state; then, all funds being realised, and a dividend declared, the agents were to select a fresh field of operations in order to organise another free state. In short, it was a grand device to give free institutions to all the new territories, one after the other; and if unopposed, there could have been little doubt of its success. These projects alarmed the Missourians—at least, such is their story. It is, however, quite as clear that the pro-slavery men were, from the first, equally on the alert; and we are to conclude that both parties had some time previously determined to run a race for the territory. The committee of congress which afterwards investigated the matter, states in its report, that 'within a few days after the organic law was passed, and as soon as its passage could be known on the border, leading citizens of Missouri crossed into the territory, held squatter meetings, and then returned to their homes. Among the resolutions are the following: That we will afford protection to no abolitionist as a settler of this territory: that we recognise the institution of slavery as already existing in this territory, and advise slaveholders to introduce their property as early as possible.' Then, early in July, a meeting of an association, having the same object in view, takes place at Westport, and resolves that it will hold itself in readiness to remove any and all emigrants who go into Kansas under the auspices of the Northern Emigrant Aid Societies. Thus, two opposite parties were distinctly pitted against each other. Had the Missourians confined themselves to the peaceful settlement of planters and slaves, no fault could be found with them *under the constitution*, however much, on moral grounds, we might have lamented their aggressions. But the pro-slavery men went a step beyond their constitutional rights. Not contenting themselves with a plan of peaceful emigration, they resolved, as we have seen, to gain their ends by violence. One excuse for their outrages is, that in giving a charter of incorporation to the New-England Emigrant Aid Company, the legislature of Massachusetts committed a trespass on the constitution; because no state is warranted in doing anything which will operate on the institutions of another state. For anything we can tell, this may have been an indiscreet and federally unlawful act; but, if such were the case, there was surely legal redress before the supreme courts of the Union. Nothing, in a word, can justify the Missourians in having armed themselves to oppose the settlement of the northern emigrants; and for this they stand condemned in the estimation of all right-thinking persons in Europe and America.

A number of quietly disposed emigrants had begun to spread themselves on the banks of the Kaw, when they heard that they were to be attacked. They were discomposed, but not frightened, and stood their ground. It seems to be customary to give the inhabitants of many of the states certain nicknames, by which they are generally known. The natives of Illinois are called *Suckers*; those of Indiana, *Hoosiers*;

and the Missourians receive the unpleasant name of *Pukes*. Well, the story ran in Kansas that the Pukes were coming, and soon a squad of them did make their appearance. Phillips, whose work presents the only intelligible narrative of the Kansas troubles that has fallen in our way, gives a graphic account of the Pukes, or 'border ruffians.' They are of several kinds. Those of the unadulterated type, are decided characters. 'Most of them,' he says, 'have been over the plains several times; if they have not been over the plains, the probability is, they have served through the war in Mexico, or seen "a deal of trouble in Texas," or at least run up and down the Missouri river often enough to catch imitative inspiration from the cat-fish aristocracy. I have often wondered where all the hard customers on the Missouri frontier come from. They seem to have congregated here by some law of gravity unexplainable. Perhaps the easy exercise of judicial authority in frontier countries may explain their fancy for them. Amongst these worthies, a man is estimated by the amount of whisky he can drink; and if he is so indiscreet as to admit he "drinks no liquor," he is set down as a dangerous character, and shunned accordingly. Imagine a fellow, tall, slim, but athletic, with yellow complexion, hairy faced, with a dirty flannel shirt, red, or blue, or green, a pair of common-place, but dark-coloured pants, tucked into an uncertain altitude by a leather belt, in which a dirty handled bowie-knife is stuck rather ostentatiously, an eye slightly whisky red, and teeth the colour of a walnut. Such is your border ruffian of the lowest type. His body might be a compound of gutta-percha, Johnny-cake, and badly smoked bacon; his spirit, the refined part, old Bourbon, "double rectified;" but there is every shade of the border ruffian. Your judicial ruffian, for instance, is a gentleman; that is, as much of a gentleman as he can be without transgressing on his more purely legitimate character of border ruffian. As "occasional imbibing" is not a sin, his character at home is irreproachable; and when he goes abroad into the territory, for instance, he does not commit any act of outrage, or vote himself, but after "aiding and comforting" those who do, returns, feeling every inch a gentleman. Then there are your less conservative border-ruffian gentlemen. They are not so nice in distinctions, and, so far from objecting, rather like to take a hand themselves; but they dress like gentlemen, and are so after a fashion. Between these and the first-mentioned large class, there is every shade and variety; but it takes the whole of them to make an effective brigade; and *then* it is not perfect without a barrel of whisky. The two gentlemanly classes of ruffians are so for political effect, or because they fancy it is their interest. The lower class are pro-slavery ruffians, merely because it is the prevalent kind of rascality; the inference is, that they would engage in any other affair in which an equal amount of whisky might be drunk, or as great an aggregate of rascality be perpetrated. Such was the kind of customers who presented themselves to the astonished gaze of the early citizens of Lawrence, while it spread its tent-like butterfly wings, just emerging from its chrysalis state, on the banks of the Kaw.'

The two principal officers appointed by the president to initiate the territorial government, were A. H. Reeder, as governor, and S. D. Lecompte, as chief-justice. Reeder was evidently not the man for the situation. He arrived in October, and the election of a delegate to congress took place, as has been said, on the 29th of November. At this election, Whitfield, the pro-slavery candidate, was returned; but the majority in his favour was swelled by 1729 illegal votes, given by bands of men who crossed the frontier from Missouri—another act totally unjustifiable, and the immediate effect of which was to further excite the people of the northern states, induce acts of

retaliation, and exasperate the actual settlers against their neighbours in Missouri.

Dire events followed, but we must leave an account of them to a future number. W. C.

AT THE HÔTEL DESSIN.

What, will you walk with me about the town,
And then go to mine inn and dine?

Comedy of Errors.

'To the Hôtel Dessin,' said I, putting the book in my pocket.

I deny that I am romantic; I deny, unequivocally, that I am influenced by fictitious sympathies. I never was an idealist in my life; I never mean to be one; and yet I told the coachman to drive me to the Hôtel Dessin.

The fact was, that I had been reading the *Sentimental Journey* all the way from St Omer; and when I reached Calais, and jumped into a *fiacre*, the name rose to my lips almost before I was aware of it. So away we rattled through a tangle of gloomy little streets, and into the court-yard of 'mine inn.'

An aristocratic-looking elderly waiter, with a ring and a massive gold watch-chain, sauntered out from a side-office, surveyed me patronisingly, and said in the blandest tone:

'What is it that monsieur desires?'

'A private room to begin with. At what hour is your table d'hôte?'

'We have no table d'hôte at the Hôtel Dessin,' replied the waiter languidly; 'our visitors are served in their apartments.'

'Then let me have a dinner as speedily as possible, and a good one, remember.'

He looked at me again, as if implying that my tone was not sufficiently deferential—yawned, rang a feeble little bell, and sank, exhausted, upon a bench beside the door. A pretty chamber-maid attended the summons.

'Marie, conduct monsieur to one of the vacant rooms on the corridor by the garden. And, Marie, on thy return, my child, bring me a glass of absinthe and water.'

Leaving this gentleman extended on the bench in an ostentatious state of ennui, I followed the neat little feet and ankles of my conductress up stairs and along a passage full of doors. One of these bore an inscription which at once arrested my attention and my footsteps—STERNE'S ROOM.

'Stay, mademoiselle!' I exclaimed; 'can I have this one?'

Marie smiled and shrugged her shoulders. 'Certainly,' she said, unlocking the door. 'The chamber is at monsieur's service. The English adore it. And why? Because somebody or other slept in it many years ago. How droll they are these English! Comment! is monsieur English? Ciel! what a mistake I have committed. Monsieur will never forgive me.'

It needed, however, no great amount of protestation on my part to convince Mademoiselle Marie that I was not in the least affronted; so she drew up the blinds, dusted the table in a pretty ineffectual sort of way with the corner of her little apron, hoped that monsieur would ring if he required anything, and tripped gaily out of the room.

As for me, I threw myself into a chair and surveyed my new quarters. A portrait of Sterne hung over the fireplace. It was painted on panel, oval-shaped, dark with age and varnish, and looked as though it had been taken during his visit to Calais—if one might judge by the cracks and stains of it. The cheek rested on the hand; the eyes were turned full upon me with

that expression of keen penetration which characterises every one of his portraits. I sat for a long time looking at it, till the waiter came and prepared the table.

'And now, garçon,' said I, after a considerable interval, during which I had been very satisfactorily employed—'and now, garçon, do you really mean to tell me that this is Sterne's room?'

'Upon my honour, monsieur,' replied the waiter, laying his hand upon his heart.

'But how can you be certain after three-quarters of a century, or perhaps more, have gone by?'

'The event, monsieur,' said the waiter, 'has been preserved in the archives of the house. We pledge ourselves to the veracity of the statement.'

I surveyed the man with admiration. He was the grandest waiter I had ever seen in my life, and I had had some little experience, too.

'What wine does monsieur desire for his dessert?'

I hesitated. Under ordinary circumstances, I should have said port or champagne; but his sublimity abashed me. I ordered a bottle of Johannisberger.

To my right lay a delicious garden, radiant with beds of verbena and scarlet geranium, and flooded with the evening sunlight. The great trees nodded and whispered, and the windows at the opposite side of the quadrangle shone like burnished gold. I threw open the *jalousies*, wheeled my table up, plucked one of the white roses that clustered outside, and fancied I could smell the sea-air.

'And so,' said I, complacently peeling my peaches, 'this is actually Sterne's room! He once sat beside this casement where I am now seated; looked out into this garden, where— But who knows? Perhaps the opening scenes of the *Sentimental Journey* were even written in this chamber, and here am I with the book in my pocket. Now, this is really delightful! Yorick'—and I poured out a glass of the amber Johannisberger, and addressed myself to the portrait over the fireplace—'Yorick, your health!'

I took the volume out, and turning the leaves idly, came to the chapters that treat of the *désobligeante*, I was decidedly in a soliloquising mood.

'Now, if I were beginning, instead of ending my journey,' said I, 'there's nothing I should have preferred to the *désobligeante*. No doubt, there is one to be had somewhere. What if the identical vehicle be still in the stables! That's nonsense, of course; and yet, I should just like to make the inquiry. Yorick, your health again, and let me tell you, sir, that it's not every man who, fifty years after his decease, gets toasted in wine at seventeen francs the bottle!'

There was a tap at my door.

'A thousand pardons,' observed the waiter, looking in. 'Monsieur is alone?'

'Go to the mischief!' said I savagely. Fortunately it was in English, so he did not understand me.

'There are two gentlemen here, monsieur—two milords, your countrymen, who desire particularly to be permitted to see this apartment for a moment.'

'An Englishman does not travel to see Englishmen,' I muttered to myself, quoting page nineteen of the *Sentimental Journey*.

'Am I honoured with monsieur's permission to shew them up?'

I was forced to say yes—not very graciously, I fear; and he ushered them in accordingly.

The first was a spare, eager-looking man, with keen quivering nostrils, and a brow furrowed with thought and expressive of immense determination of character. The appearance of the second was still more remarkable. I could not remove my eyes from his face, and yet I could scarcely have told you what it was that so attracted me. His forehead was broad and high; his mouth open and eloquent; his hair black, glossy, and falling in smooth pendulous masses almost to his

shoulders. His eyebrows were prominent and bushy, and the eyes beneath them animated by a living radiance, alternately dreamy and tender, wild and energetic. I have since heard them compared to 'the rolling of a sea with darkened lustre,' and I can think of no words which better express their changefulness and their depth.

He entered last, but stepped before his friend, and stood looking up at the portrait. The other bowed and apologised to me in a few brief hesitating words for their intrusion.

Presently the second comer turned round, and without any previous recognition of my presence, said:

'I see that you two have been dining together. Has the worthy prebend been an agreeable companion?'

The oddity of the address pleased me.

'I cannot say that I have wanted for amusement,' I replied smiling, 'since the *Sentimental Journey* has been lying beside my plate all the time.' Will you be seated?'

He needed no second invitation, but dropped indolently into an easy-chair, and lay back with his eyes still fixed on the picture; while his companion walked over to the window, and stood there, looking out, with a fidgety uneasy countenance, as if he had seen quite enough of the room, and was more anxious to go than stay.

'I do not admire the *Sentimental Journey*,' said he in the easy-chair. 'It is poor sickly stuff; and the oftener you read Sterne, the more clearly will you perceive its inferiority to *Tristram Shandy*. There is truth and reality in the one, and little beyond a clever affectation in the other. But Sterne's morals were bad. His heart was bad; his life was bad. He dallied with vice, and called it sentiment, or combined it with wit, drollery, and fancy, and served it up for the amusement of the fashionable world, whose idol he was. His mind oscillated ever on the confines of evil, and from this dangerous element he drew his "effects," his clap-trap, and his false whispering sensibility. There is not a page of Sterne's writings undefiled by some hint of impurity; and yet he approaches the subject with a mixture of courage and cowardice, as a man snuffs a candle with his fingers for the first time; or, better still, like that trembling darning with which a child touches a hot tea-urn—only because it has been forbidden. He is a hypocrite, because he affects to be the ally of virtue, and entertains all the while a secret sympathy with the enemy. At the same time, I don't think his hypocrisy can do much harm, or his morals either, unless to those who are already vicious.'

The gentleman at the window faced round, and shook his head.

'You are seldom just to authors for whom you have no liking,' he said in harsh quick tones; 'and it seems to me that in this instance you jump too hastily at conclusions. It does not follow that a man is a hypocrite because his actions give the lie to his words. If he at one time seems to be a saint, and at another a sinner, he possibly is both in reality, as well as in appearance. A person may be fond of vice and of virtue too, and practise one or the other according to the temptation of the moment: a priest may be pious, and at the same time a sot or a bigot; a woman may be modest, and a rake at heart; a poet may admire the beauties of nature, and be envious of those of other writers; a moralist may act contrary to his own precepts, and yet be sincere in recommending them to others. These are indeed contradictions, but they arise out of the contradictory qualities of our nature. A man is a hypocrite only when he affects to take delight in what he does not feel, and not because he takes a perverse delight in opposite things.'

'An admirable piece of metaphysical defence,' said the other, whom, for the sake of distinction, I shall call the philosopher; 'but one that, after all, does not

go far to prove your case. Remember Sterne's neglect of his loving wife, and the heartlessness of his flirtations, and then judge how sincere may have been those tears which he snivelled so plentifully over a dead donkey at Namport. Pshaw! 'tis the very mockery of virtue!'

'And a compliment to it at the same time,' retorted the metaphysician. 'Come, you are severe to-day, and misjudge him from an excess of manner here and there. The profoundest wisdom is sometimes combined in his pages with an outward appearance of levity; and many passages which have to bear the charge of coarseness, contain, nevertheless, a sterling view of love and charity. Think of Uncle Toby!'

'Who pitied even the devil!' said the philosopher, extending his hand indolently for the bottle of Johannisberger which I had just pushed towards him.

'Who is one of the finest tributes ever paid to human nature!' exclaimed his friend. 'Why, this I will say, that Shakspeare himself never conceived a character so genial, so delicious, so unoffending! Then, again, turn to the story of *Le Fevre*: it is perhaps the finest in the English language. I cannot conceive how Goldsmith could call Sterne "a dull fellow." The author of the *Vicar* should have known better.'

'Perhaps,' said I, venturing for the first time to mingle with their conversation, 'the tone of Goldsmith's mind was too thoroughly English to appreciate the glancing transitions, the poignant though artificial wit, and the extraordinary variableness of Sterne. It has always appeared to me that, although his style was so racy, so rapid, so idiomatically English, his genius and disposition inclined more towards the characteristics of the French writers.'

'You mean Rabelais,' said the philosopher; 'and Rabelais he was, only born in a happier age, and gifted with sentiment.'

'I was not alluding particularly to Rabelais,' I rejoined. 'I believe I was thinking more of the modern French school—of the Balzaes, Karrs, and Paul de Kocks, who can scarcely be supposed to have imitated a half-forgotten English writer of the last century.' Both of my visitors looked interested, and I went on. 'It is in his abrupt variations of feeling that this resemblance forces itself upon me. I find in the writers I have named, and in fifty others who are their pupils and contemporaries, the same antithetical propensity which delights in giving a comic turn to a serious passage—the same implied satire and half-expressed double-entendres—the same unfinished sentences, and the same hysterical mingling of smiles and tears. Compare, for instance, *Tristram Shandy* and *L'Amoureux Franci*. A Hindoo would swear that the soul of Laurence Sterne had taken up its present abode in the body of Paul de Kock. Again, let us consider his power of turning trifles to account, and evolving from the least promising incidents the most exquisite combinations of feeling and fancy. Apropos of a pin, he fills a page with wisdom on humanities; and from his barber's recommendation of a wig-buckle, deduces an admirable analysis of the French national character. Is not this one of the leading traits of modern French authorship? Place in the way of one of these witty and imaginative *feuilletonists* the most barren and uninteresting of objects, and he will enrich it with all the embroideries of art, clothe it in the rainbow hues of his own fancy, and, though it were but an old pair of ruffles or a market-barrow, end by making you laugh or cry according to his pleasure. In this manner, an ingenious French writer has elaborated a charming volume on no more extensive a subject than a journey round his room; and from so simple an incident as a flower springing up accidentally within the confines of a prison, another has contributed to our modern European literature the most touching, the most humanising, the most philosophical of moral stories.'

Thus, in his gaiety and his gravity alike, in his treatment of minutiae and his natural temperament, I find myself irresistibly reminded of the French style whenever I open a volume of Sterne. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly," replied the philosopher; "and I admit the justice of your remarks. He has all the volatility, as well as all the seriousness of the French character—the last seriousness which he was the first as well as the last traveller to discern. "If the French have a fault, Monsieur le Comte," he says in the chapters on the passport, "it is that they are too serious."

The metaphysician smiled. "Not the last traveller," he said; "for in those notes that I made on my late journey through France and Italy, I particularly observed this exception to their generally fluttering and thoughtless disposition. These last are the qualities that strike us most by contrast to ourselves, and that come most into play in the intercourse of common life; and therefore we are generally disposed to set them down as an altogether frivolous and superficial people. It is a mistake which we shall do well to correct on further acquaintance with them; or, if we persist in it, we must call to our aid an extraordinary degree of our native blindness and obstinacy. Why, the expression of a Frenchman's face is often as melancholy when he is by himself as it is lively in conversation. The instant he ceases to talk, he becomes "quite chop-fallen."

"It is strange," observed the philosopher, "how little this contradiction in their character has been noticed. They have never had the credit of it, though it stares one in the face everywhere. You can't go into one of their theatres without being struck by the silence and decorum that reign throughout the audience, from the scholar in the stalls to the workman in the galleries."

"This results in part, perhaps, from their studious inclinations," said the other. "The French are fond of reading as well as of talking. You may constantly see girls tending an apple-stall in the coldest day in winter, and reading Voltaire or Racine. Such a thing was never known in London as a barrow-woman reading Shakespeare. Yet we talk of our wide-spread civilisation and ample provisions for the education of the poor!"

"To be read thus by the lowliest as well as the loftiest, should be the highest ambition of the poet," exclaimed the philosopher enthusiastically. "Do you not remember, William, during that pedestrian excursion which you, Wordsworth, John Chester, and I once made from Nether Stowey to Linton, we stayed at an old-fashioned inn near the Valley of Rocks, breakfasted deliciously on tea, toast, eggs, and honey, and found a little worn-out copy of the *Seasons* lying in the window-seat? I took it up, and with a feeling that I cannot describe to you, exclaimed aloud: "*That is true fame!*"

"Yes," replied the metaphysician with a sigh; "I remember it perfectly. I was but a lad at the time, and I listened as if in a dream to every syllable that fell from the lips of either Wordsworth or yourself. Fame, thought I, with a sinking heart—alas! to me it is but a word: I shall never possess it; yet will I never cease to worship and to pursue it. At that time, I thought to be a painter; and while I lost myself in admiration of a fairy Claude, or hung enraptured over a Titian dark with beauty, I despaired of the perfection I worshipped. And I was right: I should never have made a painter."

His friend smiled, and shook his head. "And yet," said he, "you are content, I should think, with the share of renown that has fallen to your lot. Do you still hold that fame is but a word?"

"I hold it to be a glorious reality," replied the metaphysician; "but one which, least of all others, should

be defaced by the petty considerations of our worldly vanities and selfish personalities. Fame is the inheritance not of the dead, but of the living. It is we who look back with lofty pride to the great names of antiquity—who drink of that flood of glory as of a river, and refresh our wings in it for future flight. Fame, to my thinking, means Shakespeare, Homer, Bacon, Raphael. Fame can attach itself only to the past. Reputation is the property of the present."

"A subtle distinction," said the philosopher, emptying the last glass of my Johannisberger; "but one which"—

The door of the chamber opened.

"Your carriage, gentlemen, is ready," said the waiter.

We all rose simultaneously.

"I am sure," said the philosopher, with an air of high-bred courtesy—"I am sure we must have fatigued and interrupted you, sir, in a most unpardonable manner. I am ashamed"—and here he glanced regretfully towards the empty bottle and the comfortable *fauteuil*—"to have intruded so long upon your patience and your hospitality; but if you should ever chance to wander in the neighbourhood of Nether Stowey, Somersetshire, I will endeavour to atone for my present thoughtlessness, by making you acquainted with our green and hilly country, and our wild seashore. Do not suppose that I say this through a forced politeness. I invite few visitors, and those whom I do ask, I welcome heartily. I am but a hermit in a cottage, however, and cannot promise to give you such vintages as this!"

He took a card from his waistcoat pocket, and advancing with an undulating step, laid it down beside me on the table.

"Samuel Taylor Coleridge!" I exclaimed involuntarily, as my eyes fell on the superscription.

The philosopher extended his hand to me.

"You will not forget to come and see me," he said, "if you visit my county; and I trust you will forgive me for introducing myself. It is a bad habit that one acquires abroad—above all, when one meets a fellow-Englishman."

"I consider," said I, "that I am indebted to Yorick for this piece of good-fortune;" and I pointed to the portrait over the mantel-piece.

Coleridge plucked his companion by the sleeve. "Come, Hazlitt," he said, "we have no time to lose."

"How!" I exclaimed—"is it possible that—that your friend is"—

"William Hazlitt," replied the poet, making the metaphysician known to me with a serio-comic gesture—"William Hazlitt, the dreaded critic—the redoubtable reviewer—the terrible essayist!"

I endeavoured to stammer out something appropriate as they took leave of me; but at that time I was little used to society, and I believe I had never seen a real live author in my life before, so I fear I was not very successful.

Coleridge hurried his friend from the room, and went out last. Just as he reached the door he turned back.

"Have you read my translation of *The Visit of the Gods*?"

I replied eagerly in the affirmative.

"Then you will remember the opening lines," he said gaily:

"Never, believe me,
Appear the Immortals,
Never alone!"

The door closed directly, and he was gone. Then I heard his genial laugh upon the stairs, and presently the rattling of the wheels that bore them away. I never visited Nether Stowey, and I never saw either of my guests again. Both have since passed away, and left only their fame and their undying thoughts behind

them; but I shall never forget that brief acquaintance-ship which began and ended one autumnal afternoon in Sterne's Room, at the Hôtel Dessin.

A NEW BRIGADE.

WHAT are we to do with our ticket-of-leave men? To hang them, or reform them? That is the question that might with propriety occupy the attention of some modern Hamlet: whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune—in the shape of handkerchiefs and life-preservers—or to take arms against a sea of troubles—namely, burglary, garrotting, and murder, and, by opposing, end them.

One party indignantly asserts, that having been taken prisoners in the act of making war on society, they are entitled to no quarter, and should be strung up without mercy; the other mildly argues, that they should be let out on parole, and the honour that is proverbially known to exist among thieves, taken as a moral guarantee for their better behaviour. The former would treat them as vermin, and crush them with a strong hand once and for ever; the latter would train them up to useful occupations, as the industrious fleas were taught to go in harness and draw carriages.

Neither plan meets with my approbation. I may occasionally, when speaking of these pests of society, exclaim in a mild ejaculatory tone: 'Hang 'em!' but I am not by any means an advocate for their wholesale extermination. Neither do I overflow with the milk of human kindness to such a ridiculous extent as to say: 'Let them go free, and trust to human nature and the tracts they have read while in prison to prevent them falling into their evil courses again.' I believe that the greater part of them can no more keep from thieving than a cat can keep from cream. They have served their apprenticeship to crime, and can get their livelihood in no other way. They recur as naturally to *their* profession on getting out of prison, as a doctor would to *his*, supposing that the practice of physic were made an indictable offence, which in some instances it certainly should be. No, no; hanging and reformation are not to be thought of: one is impracticable—the other impossible. Transportation I am equally averse to. I have a plan of my own that settles the question at once. I am the *Edipus* of the nineteenth century, that has solved this great political enigma. With one stroke, as it were, of my feathered sword do I sever the Gordian-knot of modern civilisation. Thus—Use them!

Collect all the ticket-of-leave men now at large into one body, and, instead of allowing them to exercise their ingenuity on ourselves, let them devote their acknowledged skill and talents to the molestation of our enemies. They are formidable enough in twos and threes, as we know to our cost; but what a tremendous engine of destruction should we possess, if all the licensed ruffians now prowling about England were concentrated into one large force! It would be an infernal machine, scattering devastation among all those that had the ill-luck to be opposed to it. On a campaign, the services of such a body would be invaluable. What short work a gang of London housebreakers would have made of Sebastopol, and what a magnificent burglary it would have been! How silently and effectually a company of garrotoers would clear away a chain of advanced outposts! A sentry with a pitch-plaster on his mouth would be as helpless as a turtle on his back, and a charge made by a body of men armed with sponges full of chloroform, would be perfectly irresistible. Only imagine the annoyance that would be caused to an enemy by a select band of experienced thieves. They would literally steal into his camp, and carry off everything they could lay their hands on. It is

evident that an army deprived of their cooking-utensils, must surrender at discretion.

But it is impossible, in my limited space, to enumerate the manifold advantages of such a plan. It is a noble idea. It occurred to me while reading the naval and military intelligence contained in the columns of the *Times*. It appears that a number of ticket-of-leave men have enlisted in the Royal Artillery, and that the monotony of barrack-life at Woolwich is occasionally relieved by the daring exploits of these prison-heroes. It is not likely that the artillery is the only regiment thus honoured. Doubtless, large numbers are distributed throughout the whole army. This, in my opinion, is a mistake that should at once be remedied. Artists skilled in the use of skeleton-keys and jemmies will find a Minié-rifle but an awkward implement; and the beauties of the manual and platoon exercise will fail to be appreciated by hands accustomed to the more delicate manipulations required for picking pockets.

Now, to let my plan more fully develop itself. Let these ingenious warriors be taken from a sphere where their talents are not properly estimated—some of the poor fellows have even been flogged at Woolwich—and formed into a separate service. This force, into which all the ticket-of-leave men now following their professional avocations in London and the provinces should be draughted, might be organised like the regular army, and called the Brigade of Black-guards. This, again, could be subdivided into regiments of Ruffians, of various classes and denominations. Thus, we might have the Royal Riflers, the Smashers, the Dirty Half-hundred, the Roughs; and so on. As in the regulars, there is a company of grenadiers and light infantry attached to each regiment, so, in the irregulars, every corps might possess its garrotoers and light-fingered company. National regiments might easily be formed, such as the Irish Black-guards, or the Connaught Stranglers; others might be called after the places where they were raised, for instance, the Notting Hill Burglars, the Petticoat Lane Pickpockets, &c. In the line, regiments occasionally bear the name of some distinguished soldier: the 33d is the Duke of Wellington's Regiment; the 13th is Prince Albert's Own Light Infantry; in the Black-guard Brigade, Jack Sheppard and other celebrities in the Newgate calendar might be similarly honoured. Instead of Sappers and Miners, a body of Pickers and Stealers could be formed; and any members of the Brigade who have been convicted of receiving stolen goods, might with propriety be converted into Fencibles. A corps of marines would, of course, comprise all those whose offence has been mutiny, piracy, and crimes committed on board ship. The days of highwaymen are unfortunately gone by, or a body of cavalry might have been attached to the force, and called the Mounted Riflemen, or Dick Turpin's Own Light Dragoons. The civil department of the service can be administered by members of the swell mob; while the duties of orderly-room clerks, and the office-work generally, will naturally fall to the share of fraudulent bankers and dishonest officials of every description.

The uniform of the Brigade might consist of the elegant gray-cloth suit and muffin-cap peculiar to the inmates of our hulks and dock-yards; and, as a further mark of distinction, the men might be permitted to wear the *recherché* style of *coiffure* fashionable in the various prisons and houses of correction throughout the kingdom. Instead of such devices as lions, tigers, and white horses of Hanover, common in the regular service, each corps of the brigade might wear, as a regimental badge, a magpie, fox, vulture, or other dishonest and rapacious animal; and such mottoes as '*Astutia non animo, Toujours arriere, Humani nihil alienum, Malo fedari quam mori*,' would be both classical and appropriate. If colours were permitted, those of the

Petticoat Lane regiment might consist of a pair of handsome silk pocket-handkerchiefs. At parades and inspections, each man, instead of the 'small book' shewn in the line, would be expected to produce his ticket-of-leave. Every branch of the service would of course be armed in the way best suited for the display of its peculiar gifts: thus, the Garotteers would be provided with the customary handkerchief and life-preserver; and the battalion of Burglars with crowbars, files, and the various other implements necessary for their particular vocation. Chloroform would be served out to those who have been in the habit of stupefying their victim before proceeding to business; but the Riders, and Pickers, and Stealers would be naturally expected to find their own arms. The Brigade might be encamped upon Bagshot Heath, which, from old associations, is eminently fitted for the purpose. Should any gibbets still remain in that renowned locality, so much the better; they will be pleasing mementoes of departed heroes, who, had they lived in these days, would have done honour to the force which I hope shortly to see incorporated.

I have merely given the outline of the magnificent design; the details can be arranged hereafter. Like all great reforms, the plan will doubtless have its opponents; but I feel convinced mine is the only practical solution of the great question of the day. If we are tired of being knocked on the head in our parks, choked in our streets, murdered in our houses, and robbed everywhere, the remedy is in our own hands—all we have to do is to organise the Black-guard Brigade.

[There are some little matters in this *jeu d'esprit* not altogether to the taste of the *Journal*; but we may perhaps take our revenge upon our eccentric friend by treating more gravely at another time the position of the unfortunates he makes the butt of his humour.—Ed.]

NATURAL HISTORY OF MY POND.

IN TWO PARTS.—CONCLUSION.

THE next creature we must notice is a blood-sucker upon rather a larger scale, though he operates for the common good; and although no one is proud of his acquaintance, there are few of us who have not at times profited by his kind offices. This friend is the leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*). He is common in the pond, and is really, prejudice apart, a handsome-looking fellow: his back is olive-green, with long red stripes, and his under-surface is yellow, thickly spotted with black. If he is rather a hungry being, and too fond of crying 'Give, give,' he still works for weal, and not for woe. All honour, therefore, to the leech; he is under my special protection. Not so, however, the less organised beings which are nearly allied to him; they are *uncanny*, and are the cause of more mischief than we perhaps know. The commonest of these Planariae, for so we must term them—their specific name is unknown to me—is a small black species, abundant on the leaves of the water-lily, apparently a vegetable feeder, and always herding together in great numbers. But there is another kind, far more elegant, though not quite so plentiful; much larger; of an ovate instead of a linear form, and with a beautifully crenated margin. It is of a white colour, delicately shaded with gray. This may often be drawn to shore with the water-plants. These are beings to be regarded with suspicion: the metamorphoses they undergo are strange, and as yet imperfectly understood; and if they are innocent, yet their first-cousins, the Distomatæ, can be proved to be guilty enough, causing the disease in sheep known by the name of the rot: a disease which sometimes attacks man also. There is another being in My Pond whose character is

no whit better—a long thread-like worm (*Gordius aquaticus*), often several inches long, curiously coiled up, yet not thicker than a cotton thread. He is not in his perfect state; he means mischief; and is, depend upon it, only an evil spirit in disguise.

The only remaining articulate animals to be mentioned are the pretty little wheel-animals; and to make their acquaintance we must call in the aid of the microscope. The little group are, however, quite worth the trouble. The curious wheels with which their mouths are furnished have gained them their name, *Rotifera*. These wheels are often to be seen in full action; the cilia or fringe of minute lashes on them being at such a time in constant motion. The little being then fixes itself firmly to some small stalk or leaf of an aquatic plant, and by the aid of the current so set up, its food is procured. Below this wheel-apparatus is a powerful armament of teeth, arranged so as to look like a cross. The commonest of these is called *Rotifer vulgaris*; but there are many kinds in the pond. They are, for the most part, just visible to the naked eye, but cannot be seen properly without the microscope. The play of the wheels is most curious, and well worthy of notice. At the will of the animal, however, the wheels can be withdrawn, and the little being can crawl along, first fixing the hinder extremity, then bending its body after the manner of a geometric or looping caterpillar, and fixing the upper, or head—then making this the fulcrum, and proceeding as before. This little being is the last to be mentioned of the articulata, though its curious apparatus of wheels make it not the least interesting.

From the jointed or articulate animals, we pass to the mollusks; and of these, by far the most numerous section in the pond are those which resemble the snail in shape and structure. They have a distinct head, and a large foot on the lower surface of the body, by which they walk along the plants on whose leaves they feed. They are water-snails, and there are several species; there is one with the whorls arranged in a perfectly flat coil, like a 'Catherine's wheel,' and from this it has its name, *planorbis*. Of this genus there are two or three species on the pond, as indeed there are also of the next group, or true water-snails, where the spiral is, as it were, drawn out, so as to form a cone. Of these shells, there is one, more than an inch in length, of a brown colour, and very pointed at the apex (*Lymnaea stagnalis*); it is abundant on the leaves of the pond-weed. There is also a lesser species (*L. peregrina*), about a quarter the size, and which is rather found along the banks and amongst the water-grasses which fringe the pool; both, however, are plentiful. If these are examined, it will be seen that they all breathe by a large sac, just as the snail does, serving them for a lung; they breathe, therefore, through the agency of the air. There is, however, another shell in My Pond, of a less conical form, and wider in proportion to its length, with an indistinct spiral band winding round the shell. This species (*Paludina vivipara*) breathes through the means of the oxygen dissolved in the water, as many creatures previously examined by us have also done; the breathing is therefore by branchiae—that is, a row of comb-like gills, over which the water plays.

Unfortunately, the pond does not contain any of the polype-like mollusks or Bryozoa, as they are termed—that is to my knowledge—and no bivalve shells, so that the stock of this class in my preserve is very small.

Of radiated beings, which gain their name from the star-like form in which their parts are usually arranged—the starfish being the most familiar example—there is only one species in the pond (*Hydra viridis*), the pretty little green fresh-water polype. This is not rare upon the submerged stems of various plants. It is a sea-anemone on a very small scale, with long tentacles, and with a much simpler structure, for it is all stomach.

Eight arms surround the mouth, and these arms are used to seize upon creatures larger even than the polype itself. It is very bold, and does not much seem to care what it attacks; and perhaps it has such power of surviving accidents, that it may brave many dangers with impunity. Cut it in two, you only multiply it; turn it inside out like the finger of a glove, and the animal feels no difference—the skin serves for stomach, and the stomach for skin. It walks nimbly along as the rotifers were previously described to do, and may often be seen with numerous young budding forth from the side, each with its tentacles ready; so that it then presents the spectacle of one animal with many mouths, and all searching for food, all eager for prey. The hydra, though small, is extremely rapacious, and seizes very eagerly all things coming within its grasp: even a brother-hydra is sometimes caught and devoured; but he has the privilege of free entry, and escapes undigested from his apparently perilous abode. The poor water-flea is not so fortunate; he is a frequent prey. There is some power resident in the arms of the hydra by which it can destroy its victim. Once in its fatal grasp, there is no escape; and it has been stated by Trembley, that even a young minnow will sometimes be thus caught and devoured by this walking stomach.

And now, last of all, we come to those earliest forms of life grouped together under the name of animalcules or Protozoa, many of which are almost daily making their way from the animal into the vegetable kingdom. My poor little favourite, the volvox, which rolled about under the microscope in such a regular and marvellous manner, is now degraded into a plant. The pretty Diatomaceæ, with their elegantly sculptured skeletons of flint, are also looked upon as vegetables. The most beautiful of those left to me are those living bells, set like flowers upon long stalks, which twist and writhe about with every passing current. These Vorticellæ, as they are called, are lovely objects under a low power of the microscope, and may be seen with the naked eye, looking like mildew on the stem of one of the water-plants. Sometimes, as we watch them, a bell-shaped head escapes from its stalk, and swims, by means of its cilia, actively about through the water. Perhaps my pretty little sun-shaped animalcule (*Actinophrys sol*) is only one of the stages in the development of this vorticella; but this is yet unproved. There are also to be found that proteus of animalcules whose shape is never fixed, now stretching out one portion of its body as an arm, and now another (*Amoeba proteus*): there are also plentifully the flask-shaped Euclesia, and of course hundreds of infusorial animalcules. There is indeed almost sure to be some object of microscopic interest surrounding every decaying fragment of leaf, and in every portion of mud brought from the bottom of the water.

Now we have gone together through the various groups of animal life found in a pond not larger than an ordinary mill-pond; and indeed there are few mill-ponds in the kingdom which would not supply every one of the creatures mentioned, except, perhaps, the water-shrew, which is, however, more frequent than is often thought: nay, more than this, all the invertebrate portion can be kept in one of the bowls used for gold-fish, and will make a very pretty vivarium on a small scale. The plants that should be taken are the *Vallisneria spiralis*, which, though not an English plant, can always be readily procured; the callitriche; or, better still, if it grows in the neighbourhood, the water-violet, *Hottonia palustris*, and a few fronds of the pretty *Lemna trisulca*, the ivy-leaved duck-weed. For the living beings, I would recommend the common stickle-back; two or three of the smaller water-beetles, especially those of the genus *Colymbetes*; some of the larvae of the dragon-fly; the water-scorpion also, and the *Notonecta* before mentioned; plenty of the crustaceous

animals described here, which will serve not only for amusement, but also for use, as they will supply the larger beings with food; and in addition to these, one or two species of the larger snails, of which the genus *Planorbis* or *Paludina* is to be preferred, and some of the smaller kinds of *Lymnæus*, *L. stagnalis* being rather too voracious for so small an aquarium; then, though last, not least in importance, the *Hydra viridis*; and the experimenter will find more amusement in so small a compass than he could have deemed possible before the trial. One word also of caution: every one making such a collection should avoid the Vorticellæ, for they attach themselves to weakly animals, and cause them to die at all events more quickly than they otherwise would have done. To an inhabitant of London, the additional information may be given, that an afternoon's excursion to Hampstead Heath would supply him with all the species here mentioned.

THE WAR-TRAIL:

A ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXII.—CHASED BY A 'GRIZZLY.'

THE bear was one of the largest of his kind; but it was not his size that impressed me with fear, so much as the knowledge of his fierce nature. It was not the first time I had encountered the grizzly bear; and I knew his habits well. I was rather surprised at seeing the *Ursus ferox* in that region. The range of this species is more to the west, among the defiles of the Rocky Mountains; but individuals occasionally wander as far east as the meridian of the Mississippi. The one before me was of a yellowish-red colour, with legs and feet nearly black; but colour is no characteristic among these animals, scarcely two of them being alike in this respect. I was familiar with the form and aspect, and could not be mistaken; I recognised the long shaggy pelage, the straight front, and broad facial disk, which distinguishes this species from the *Ursus Americanus*. The yellow eyes, the huge teeth, but half concealed by the lips, and, above all, the long-curving claws—the most prominent marks of the species, as they are his most formidable means of attack—were all identified.

When my eyes first rested upon this monster, he was just emerging out of the barranca at the very spot where I had climbed up myself. It was his tracks, then, I had observed while scaling the cliff!

On reaching the level of the prairie, he advanced a pace or two, and then halting, he reared up and stood upon his hind-legs; at the same time he uttered a snorting sound, which resembled the 'blowing' of hogs when suddenly startled in the forest. For some moments he remained in his upright attitude, rubbing his head with his fore-paws, and playing them about after the manner of monkeys. In fact, as he stood fronting me, he looked not unlike a gigantic ape.

When I say that I was terrified by the presence of this unwelcome intruder, I speak no more than truth. Had I been on horseback—on the back of Moro—I should have regarded the creature no more than the snail that crawled upon the grass. The grizzly bear is too slow to overtake a horse; but I was on foot, and well knew that the animal could outrun me, however swift I deemed myself.

To suppose that he would not attack me would have been to suppose an improbability. I did not count upon such a thing; I knew too well the disposition of the enemy that approached. I knew that in nine cases out of ten the grizzly bear is the assailant—that no animal in America will willingly risk a contest with him; and I am not certain that the lion of Africa would wear his laurels after an encounter with this fierce quadruped.

Man himself shuns such an encounter, unless

mounted upon the friendly horse; and even then, where the ground is not clear and open, the prudent trapper always gives 'old Ephraim'—the prairie sobriquet of the grizzly—a wide berth, and rides on without molesting him. The white hunter reckons a grizzly bear equal in prowess to two Indians; while the Indian accounts the destruction of one of these animals a great feat in his life's history. Among Indian braves, a necklace of bear's claws is a badge of honour, since these adornments can be worn only by the man who has himself killed the animals from which they are taken.

On the other hand, the grizzly bear fears no adversary; he assails the largest animals on sight. The elk, the moose, the bison, or wild-horse, if caught, is instantly killed. With a blow of his paw, he can lay open the flesh, as if it had been gashed with an axe; and he can drag the body of a full-grown buffalo to any distance. He rushes upon man, whether mounted or on foot; and a dozen hunters have retreated before his furious assault. A dozen bullets—ay, nearly twice that number—have been fired into the body of a grizzly bear without killing him; and only a shot through the brain or the heart will prove instantaneously mortal. Gifted with such tenacity of life and sanguinary fierceness of disposition, no wonder the grizzly bear is a dreaded creature. Were he possessed of the fleetness of the lion or tiger, he would be a more terrible assailant than either; and it is not too much to say that his haunts would be unapproachable by man. He is slow, however, compared with the horse; and there is another circumstance scarcely less favourable to those who pass through his district—he is not a tree-climber. Indeed, he does not affect the forest; but there is usually some timber in the neighbourhood of his haunts; and many a life has been saved by his intended victim having taken refuge in a tree.

I was well acquainted with these points in the natural history of this animal, and you may fancy the feelings I experienced at finding myself in the presence of one of the largest and fiercest upon the naked plain, alone, dismounted, almost unarmed! There was not a bush where I could hide myself, not a tree into which I might climb. There was no means of escape, and almost none of defence; the knife was the only weapon I had with me; my rifle I had left upon the other side of the barranca, and to reach it was out of the question. Even could I have got to the path that led down the cliff, it would have been madness to attempt crossing there; although not a tree-climber, the grizzly bear, by means of his great claws, could have scaled the cliff more expeditiously than I. I should have been caught before I could have reached the bottom of the ravine, had I made the attempt.

The bear was directly in the path. It would have been literally running 'into his arms' to have gone that way.

These reflections occupy minutes of your time to read; I thought them in less than moments. A single glance around shewed me the utter helplessness of my situation; I saw there was no alternative but a desperate conflict—a conflict with the knife! Despair, that for a moment had unnerved, now had the effect of bracing me; and, fronting my fierce foe, I stood ready to receive him.

I had heard of hunters having conquered and killed the grizzly bear with no other weapon than a knife, but after a terrible and protracted struggle—after many wounds and sore loss of blood. I had read in the book of a naturalist, that 'a man might end a struggle with a bear in a few instants, if one hand be sufficiently at liberty to grasp the throat of the animal with the thumb and fingers externally, just at the root of the tongue, as a slight degree of compression there will generally suffice to produce a spasm of the glottis, that will soon suffocate the bear beyond the power of

offering resistance or doing injury.' Beautiful theory! Sagacious naturalist! How would you like to try the experiment? Have you ever heard of birds being caught by the application of 'salt to the tail?' The theory is as correct as yours, and I am certain the practice of it would not be more difficult!

But I digress among these after-thoughts. I had no time to reflect upon 'compressions of the tongue' or 'spasms of the glottis.' My antagonist soon finished his reconnaissance of me, and, dropping upon all fours, he uttered a loud roar, and rushed towards me with open mouth.

I had resolved to await his attack; but as he came nearer, and I beheld his great gaunt form, his gleaming teeth, and his senna-coloured eyes flashing like fire, I changed my design; a new thought came suddenly across my mind; I turned and fled.

The thought that prompted me to adopt this course was, that the bear might be attracted by the carcass of the antelope, and pause over it—perhaps long enough to give me a start, or enable me to escape altogether. If not, my situation could be no worse than it then was.

Alas! my hope was short-lived. On reaching the antelope, the fierce monster made no halt. I glanced back; he was already past it, and closing rapidly upon my heels.

I am a swift runner—one of the swiftest. Many a school-day triumph can I remember; but what was my speed against such a competitor! I was only running myself out of breath. I should be less prepared for the desperate conflict that must soon come off; better to turn, and at once face the foe!

I had half resolved—half turned, in fact—when an object flashed before my eyes that dazzled them. Inadvertently, I had run in the direction of the pond; I was now upon its shore. It was the sun gleaming from the water that dazzled me. The surface was calm as a mirror.

A new idea—a sort of half-hope—rushed instantaneously into my mind. It was the straw to the drowning man. The fierce brute was close behind me; another instant, and we must have grappled. Not yet, not yet, thought I. I should fight him in the water—in the deep water: that might give me an advantage. Perhaps, then, the contest would be more equal; perhaps I might escape by diving!

I sprang into the pond without a moment of hesitation. The water was knee-deep. I plunged onward, making for the centre; the spray rose round me; the pond deepened as I advanced; I was soon up to the waist.

I glanced around with anxious heart; the bear was standing upon the edge. To my surprise and joy, I saw that he had halted, and seemed disinclined to follow me.

I say, to my surprise I saw this, for I knew that water has no terrors for the grizzly bear; I knew that he could swim; I had seen many of his kind crossing deep lakes and rapid rivers. What, then, hindered him from following me?

I could not guess, nor, indeed, did I try to guess, at the moment; I thought of nothing but getting further from the shore, and waded on till I had arrived near the centre of the lake and stood neck-deep in the water. I could go no further without swimming, and therefore came to a stand, with my face turned towards my pursuer.

I watched his every movement. He had risen once more upon his hind-quarters, and stood looking after me, but still apparently without any intention of taking to water.

After regarding me for some time, he fell back upon all-fours, and commenced running round the border of the pond, as if searching for a place to enter.

There were not over two hundred paces between us,

for the pond was only twice that in diameter. He could soon have reached me, had he felt so disposed; but for some reason or other, he seemed disinclined to a 'swim.' For a full half-hour he kept running back and forwards along the shore.

Besides the apprehension in which his presence held me, my situation was far from comfortable. Although there was a warm sun overhead, the water was as cold as ice, and my teeth began to chatter like castanets. I knew not how long the scene was to last. I well knew the vengeful disposition of the grizzly bear, and the untiring pertinacity with which he follows any one who may have roused his resentment. Fortunately, I had neither wounded nor molested him, and I was in hopes that my innocence in this respect might save me from a very protracted siege. I had no other hope of being rescued from my perilous situation.

He appeared to have made up his mind to wait until I should come out; though once or twice I thought he was about to swim towards me; for he halted upon the very edge, craned his head over the water, oscillating the forepart of his body, as if going to plunge in. After manoeuvring in this way for some seconds, he turned his side, and continued to pace along the bank.

What he thought of our relative situations, I cannot tell. A third party, in the position of a spectator, would have regarded the tableau as comic in the extreme. Up to my neck in the middle of the pond, with only my head appearing above the water, I must have presented a ludicrous spectacle; and now that I think of it, I cannot help smiling at the figure I must have cut in the eyes of the bear. I did not laugh at it then; I was too badly frightened for that. There was no laughter in me at that hour.

For a long while—full half-an-hour, I should judge—the bear remained near the edge of the pond. Now and again, he made short excursions out into the prairie; but always returned soon, and regarded me afresh, as though determined not to lose sight of me for any length of time. I was in hopes that he might stray round to the other side of the pond, and give me the chance of making a rush for the ravine; but no; he continued on that side where he had first appeared, as though he suspected my design.

I began to despair. I shivered. The pond must have been a spring, so chill were its waters. I shivered, but kept my place; I dared not move out of it. I even feared to agitate the water around me, lest by so doing I might excite my fierce enemy, and tempt his onset. I shivered, but stood still.

My patience was at length rewarded. The bear, making one of his short tours into the prairie, espied the carcass of the antelope. I saw that he had halted over something, though I could not tell what, for my eyes were below the level of the plain. Presently, his head was raised again, and in his jaws were the remains of the prong-horn. To my joy, I now perceived that he was dragging it towards the barranca, and in another minute he had disappeared with it behind the cliff.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TOUGHEST STRUGGLE OF MY LIFE.

I swam a few strokes, and then wading gently and without noise, I stood upon the sandy shore. With shivering frame and dripping garments, I stood, uncertain what course to pursue. I was upon the opposite side of the lake—I mean opposite to where I had entered it. I had chosen that side intentionally, lest the bear should suddenly return. He might deposit the carcass in his lair, and come back to look after me. It is a habit of these animals, when not pressed by immediate hunger, to bury their food or store it in their caves. Even the eating of the antelope would have been an affair of only a few minutes' time.

The bear might still return, more fierce that he had tasted blood.

I was filled with irresolution. Should I fly off to the plain beyond the reach of pursuit? I should have to return again for my horse and rifle. To take to the prairie on foot would be like going to sea without a boat; but, even had I been sure of reaching the settlements in safety without my horse, I could not think of such a thing. I loved my Moro too well to leave him behind me: I would have risked life itself rather than part with that noble creature. No; the idea of deserting him was not entertained for a moment.

But how was I to join him? The only path by which I could cross the barranca, had just been taken by the bear. He was no doubt still upon it, in the bottom of the ravine. To attempt passing over, would be to bring myself once more under the eyes of the fierce brute; and I should certainly become his victim.

Another idea suggested itself—to go up the barranca, and find another crossing, or else head it altogether, and come down upon the opposite side. That was clearly the best plan.

I was about starting forward to execute it, when, to my dismay, I again beheld the bear; this time, not upon the same side with myself, but upon the opposite one, where Moro was picketed! He was slowly climbing out of the ravine, and, when I first saw him, was dragging his huge body over the escarpment of the cliff. In a moment, he stood erect upon the open plain.

I was filled with a new consternation; I saw too surely that he was about to attack the horse!

The latter had already observed the bear's approach, and seemed to be fully aware of his danger. I had staked him at the distance of about four hundred yards from the barranca, and upon a lazo of about twenty in length. At sight of the bear, he had run out to the end of his trail-rope, and was snorting and plunging with affright.

This new dilemma arrested me, and I stood with anxious feelings to watch the result. I had no hope of being able to yield the slightest aid to my poor horse—at least none occurred to me at the moment.

The bear made directly towards him, and my heart throbbed wildly as I beheld the fierce brute almost within clashing distance. The horse sprang round, however, and galloped upon a circle of which the lazo was the radius. I knew, from the hard jerks he had already given to the rope, that there was no chance of its yielding and freeing him. No; it was a raw-hide lazo of the toughest thong. I knew its power, and I remembered how firmly I had driven home the picket-pin. This I had now cause to regret. Oh, what would I have given to have been able to draw the blade of my knife across that rope!

I continued to watch the struggle with a painful feeling of suspense. The horse still kept out of reach by galloping round the circumference of the circle, while the bear made his attacks by crossing its chords, or running in circles of lesser diameter. The whole scene bore a resemblance to an act at the Hippodrome, Moro being the steed, and the bear taking the part of the ring-master!

Once or twice, the rope circling round, and quite taut, caught upon the legs of the bear, and, after carrying him along with it for some distance, flung him over upon his back. This seemed to add to his rage, as, after rising each time, he ran after the horse with redoubled fury. I could have been amused at the singular spectacle, but that my mind was too painfully agitated about the result.

The scene continued for some minutes without much change in the relative position of the actors. I began to hope that the brute might be baffled after all, and finding the horse too nimble for him, would give over his attempts, particularly as I had noticed the latter

administer several kicks that might have discomfited any other assailant; but these only rendered the bear more savage and vengeful.

Just at this time the scene assumed a new phase, likely to bring about the *dénouement*. The rope had once more pressed against the bear; but this time, instead of trying to avoid it, he seized it in his teeth and paws. I thought at first he was going to cut it, and this was exactly what I wished for; but no—to my consternation I saw that he was crawling along it by constantly renewing his hold, and thus gradually and surely drawing nearer to his victim! The horse now screamed with terror!

I could bear the sight no longer. I remembered that I had left my rifle near the edge of the barranca, and some distance from the horse; I remembered, too, that after shooting the antelope, I had carefully reloaded it. I ran forward to the cliff, and dashed madly down its face; I climbed the opposite steep, and clutching the gun, rushed towards the scene of strife.

I was still in time; the bear had not yet reached his victim, though now within less than six feet of him.

I advanced within ten paces, and fired. As though my shot had cut the thong, it gave way at the moment, and the horse with a wild neigh sprang off into the prairie!

I had hit the bear, as I afterwards ascertained, but not in a vital part, and my bullet had no more effect upon him than if it had been a drop of snipe-shot. It was the strength of despair that had broken the rope, and set free the steed.

It was my turn now, for the bear, as soon as he perceived that the horse had escaped him, turned and sprang upon me, uttering, as he did so, a loud cry. I had no choice but fight. I had no time to reload. I struck the brute once with my clubbed rifle, and flinging the gun away, grasped the readier knife. With the strong keen blade—the knife was a bowie—I struck out before me; but the next moment, I felt myself grappled and held fast. The sharp claws tore up my flesh; one paw was gripped over my hips, another rested on my shoulder, while the white teeth gleamed before my eyes. My knife-arm was free; I had watched this when grappling, and with all the energy of despair, I plunged the keen blade between the ribs of my antagonist. I sought for the heart at every stab.

We rolled together to the ground, over and over again. The red blood covered us both. I saw it welling from the lips of the fierce monster, and I joyed to think that my knife reached his vitals. I was wild—I was mad—I was burning with a fierce vengeance—with anger, such as one might feel for a human foe!

Over and over the ground in the fierce struggle of life and death. Again I feel the terrible claws, the tearing teeth; again goes my blade up to the hilt. Gracious powers! how many lives has he? Will he never yield to the red steel? See the blood!—rivers of blood—the prairie is red—we roll in blood. I am sick at the sight—sick—I faint—

CHAPTER XXIV.

OLD COMRADES.

I fancied myself in a future world, battling with some fearful demon. No; those forms I see around me are of the earth. I still live!

My wounds pain me. Some one is binding them up. His hand is rude; but the tender expression of his eye tells me that his heart is kind. Who is he? Whence came he?

I am still upon the wide prairie; I see that clearly enough. Where is my terrible antagonist? I remember our fierce fight—everything that occurred; but—I thought he had killed me!

I certainly was dead. But no; it cannot have been. I still live!

I see above me the blue sky—around me the green plain. Near me are forms—the forms of men, and yonder I see horses!

Into whose hands have I fallen? Whoever they be, they are friends; they must have rescued me from the gripe of the monster. But how? No one was in sight: how could they have arrived in time? I would ask, but have not strength.

The men are still bending over me. I observe one with large beard and brown bushy whiskers. There is another face, old and thin, and tanned to a copper colour. My eyes wander from one to the other; some distant recollections stir within me. Those faces— Now I see them but dimly—I see them no longer—

I had fainted, and was again insensible. Once more I became conscious, and this time felt stronger: I could better understand what was passing around me. I observed that the sun was going down; but a buffalo robe, suspended upon two upright saplings, guarded his rays from the spot where I lay. My serapé was under me, and my head rested in my saddle, over which another robe had been laid. I lay upon my side, and the position gave me a commanding view of all that was passing. A fire was burning near, by which were two persons, one seated, the other standing; my eyes passed from one to the other, scanning each in turn.

The younger stood leaning on his rifle, looking into the fire. 'He was the type of a "mountain man," a trapper. He was full six feet in his moccasins, and of a build that suggested the idea of strength and Saxon ancestry. His arms were like young oaks; and his hand grasping the muzzle of his gun, appeared large, fleshless, and muscular. His cheek was broad and firm, and was partially covered with a bushy whisker, that met over the chin; while a beard of the same colour—dull brown—fringed the lips. The eye was gray, or bluish gray, small, well-set, and rarely wandering. The hair was light brown; and the complexion of the face, which had evidently once been blonde, was now nearly as dark as that of a half-breed. Sun-tan had produced this metamorphosis. The countenance was prepossessing: it might have been once handsome. Its expression was bold, but good-humoured, and bespoke a kind and generous nature.

The dress of this individual was the well-known costume of his class—a hunting-shirt of dressed deer-skin, smoked to the softness of a glove; leggings reaching to the hips, and fringed down the seams; moccasins of true Indian make, soled with buffalo hide (*purflèche*). The hunting-shirt was belted around the waist, but open above, so as to leave the throat and part of the breast uncovered; but over the breast could be seen the under-shirt, of finer material—the dressed skin of the young antelope, or the fawn of the fallow-deer. A short cape, part of the hunting-shirt, hung gracefully over the shoulders, ending in a deep fringe cut out of the buckskin itself. A similar fringe embellished the draping of the skirt. On the head was a racoon-cap—the face of the animal over the front, while the barred tail, like a plume, fell drooping over the left shoulder.

The accoutrements were a bullet-pouch, made from the undressed skin of a tiger-cat, ornamented with the head of the beautiful summer-duck. This hung under the right arm, suspended by a shoulder-strap; and attached, in a similar manner, was a huge crescent-shaped horn, upon which was carved many a strange souvenir. His arms consisted of a knife and pistol—both stuck in the waist-belt—and a long rifle, so straight that the line of the barrel seemed scarcely to deflect from that of the butt.

But little attention had been paid to ornament in either his dress, arms, or equipments; and yet there was a gracefulness in the hang of his tunic-like shirt, a stylishness about the fringing and bead-embroidery, and an air of jauntiness in the set of the 'coon-skin' cap, that shewed the wearer was not altogether unmindful of his personal appearance. A small pouch or case, ornamented with stained porcupine quills, hung down upon his breast. This was the pipe-holder—no doubt a *gage d'amour* from some dark-eyed, dark-skinned damsel, like himself a denizen of the wilderness.

His companion was very different in appearance; unlike him—in almost every respect unlike anybody I had ever seen.

The whole appearance of this individual was odd and striking. He was seated on the opposite side of the fire, with his face partially turned towards me, and his head sunk down between a pair of long lank thighs. He looked more like the stump of a tree dressed in dirt-coloured buckskin than a human being; and had his arms not been in motion, he might have been mistaken for such an object. Both his arms and jaws were moving; the latter engaged in polishing a rib of meat which he had half roasted over the coals.

His dress—if dress it could be called—was simple as it was savage. It consisted of what might have once been a hunting-shirt, but which now looked more like a leathern bag with the bottom ripped open, and sleeves sewed into the sides. It was of a dirty-brown colour, wrinkled at the hollow of the arms, patched round the armpits, and greasy all over; it was fairly "caked" with dirt; there was no attempt at either ornament or fringe. There had been a cape, but this had evidently been drawn upon from time to time, for patches and other uses, until scarcely a vestige of it remained. The leggings and moccasins were on a par with the shirt, and seemed to have been manufactured out of the same hide. They, too, were dirt-brown, patched, wrinkled, and greasy. They did not meet each other, but left a piece of ankle bare, and that also was dirt-brown like the buckskin. There was no under-shirt, vest, or other garment to be seen, with the exception of a close-fitting cap, which had once been catskin; but the hair was all worn off, leaving a greasy, leathery-looking surface, that corresponded well with the other parts of the dress. Cap, shirt, leggings, and moccasins, looked as if they had never been stripped off since the day they were first tried on, and that might have been many a year ago. The shirt was open, displaying the naked breast and throat, and these, as well as the face, hands, and ankles, had been tanned by the sun and smoked by the fire to the hue of rusty copper. The whole man, clothes and all, looked as if he had been smoked on purpose.

His face bespoke a man of sixty, or thereabout; his features were sharp, and somewhat aquiline; and the small eyes were dark, quick, and piercing. His hair was black, and cut short; his complexion had been naturally brunette, though there was nothing of the Frenchman or Spaniard in his physiognomy. He was more likely of the black-Saxon breed.

As I looked at this man, I saw that there was a strangeness about him, independently of the oddness of his attire. There was something peculiar about his head—something *wanting*.

What was it that was wanting? It was his ears!

There is something awful in a man without his ears. It suggests some horrid drama—some terrible scene of cruel vengeance: it suggests the idea of crime committed and punishment inflicted.

I might have had such horrid imaginings, but that I chanced to know why those ears were wanting. I remembered the man who was sitting before me!

It seemed a dream, or, rather, the re-enactment of an old scene. Years before, I had seen that individual, and for the first time, in a situation very similar. My

eyes first rested upon him, seated as he was now, over a fire, roasting and eating. The attitude was the same; the *tout ensemble* in no respect different. There was the same greasy catskin-cap, the same scant leggings, the same brown buckskin covering over the lanky frame. Perhaps neither shirt nor leggings had been taken off since I last saw them. They appeared no dirtier, however; that was not possible. Nor was it possible, having once looked upon the wearer, ever to forget him. I remembered him at a glance—Reuben Rawlings, or 'Old Rube,' as he was more commonly called, one of the most celebrated of trappers. The younger man was 'Bill Garey,' another celebrity of the same profession, and old Rube's partner and constant companion.

My heart gladdened at the sight of these old acquaintances. I now knew I was with friends.

I was about to call out to them, when my eye wandering beyond, rested upon the group of horses, and what I saw startled me from my recumbent position. There was Rube's old, blind, bare-ribbed, high-boned, long-eared mare-mustang. Her lank grizzled body, naked tail, and mulish look, I remembered well. There, too, was the large powerful horse of Garey, and there was my own steed Moro picketed beside them! This was a joyful surprise to me, as he had galloped off after his escape from the bear, and I had felt anxious about recovering him; but it was not the sight of Moro that caused me to start with astonishment; it was at seeing another well-remembered animal—another horse. Was I mistaken? Was it an illusion? Were my eyes or my fancy again mocking me? No! It was a reality. There was the noble form, the graceful and symmetrical outlines, the smooth coat of silver white, the flowing tail, the upright jetty ears—all were before my eyes. It was he. *It was the white steed of the prairies!*

MORTALITY.

'And we shall be changed.'

Ye dainty mosses, lichens gray,
Laid check on cheek in tender fold,
Each with a soft smile day by day
Returning to the mould;

Brown leaves, that with aerial grace
Slip from the branch like birds a-wing,
Each leaving in the appointed place
Its bud of future spring;

If we, God's sentient creatures, knew
But half your faith in our decay,
We should not tremble as we do
When He calls clay to clay;

But with an equal patience sweet,
We should put off this mortal gear,
In whate'er new form is meet,
Content to reappear;

Knowing each germ of life He gives
Must have in Him its source and rise;
Being that of His being lives
May change, but never dies.

Ye dead leaves, dropping soft and slow,
Ye mosses green, and lichens fair,
Go to your graves, as I will go,
For God is also there.

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